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Butia - Growing Guide

Caring For Butia Capitata

Jelly Palm

This is a South America palm from Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina which can be grown outside only in mild seaside locations. Elsewhere it is a converstory plant or one which is grown in a large container and taken into the conversvatoy or greenhouse over winter.

Butia capita is a slow growing palm with a sturdy, fat trunk usually covered with flat leaf bases. At Ventnor Botanic Gardens is the Isle of Wight, and in the Fox Rosehill Gardens in Falmouth, these palms have grown into large ornamental and architectural tress of great age ad can eventually grow up to 20 feet in height.

The leaves are graceful, arching and drooping. They can be up to 10 feet long in maturity with numerous blue-green leaflets from the spiny leaf stalks. Overall the leaflets and leaf form a ‘V’ shape. In the summer warmth of Ventnor mature plants produce huge panicles of creamy yellow flowers which can be 3 or to 5 feet long. After flowering, egg shaped fruits appear which are yellow then orange. Individual flowers male or female.

The palms obviously need the hottest possible location with good drainage. Germinating the seed in a frost free greenhouse is the best with an under heated seed bench.

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